

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

HA-05 MCT-02 AID-05 /076 W

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P 141428Z SEP 78

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3159

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 2931

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PORS PINS BC

SUBJ: STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS: STATUS REPORT

REF: GABORONE 2913 AND PREVIOUS

1. UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WHO WERE DETAINED FOLLOWING DEMONSTRATIONS REPORTED REFTEL HAVE BEEN RELEASED. EIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPELLED WITHOUT A STATEMENT OF REASONS OR CONSULTATION WITH THE RECTOR. IN ADDITION, TWO SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONALS ON THE UBS FACULTY HAVE BEEN DECLARED "PROHIBITED IMMIGRANTS" (P'D). THEY ARE PROFESSOR BOB LESHOL, HEAD OF ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AND WELL-KNOWN WRITER AND POET, AND DR. GABRIEL SETILOANE, PROFESSOR AND HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY. THE LATTER HAVE BEEN TOLD TO LEAVE BOTSWANA AT 8:00 AM, SEPT 15.

2. AMCIT WHO IS PROFESSOR OF AFRICAN HISTORY AT UNIVERSITY SAYS STUDENTS WERE STILL MEETING AT 1:00 PM TODAY TO DECIDE WHETHER TO RETURN
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TO CLASSES. THEY SAY THEY FEAR FOR THEIR "SECURITY" IF THEY RETURN IN VIEW OF POLICE ACTION ON SEPT 11. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF THEY DO NOT RETURN TO CLASSES THE UNIVERSITY WILL CLOSE AND THEY WILL BE SENT HOME FOR UNDETERMINED LENGTH OF TIME. THEIR SECURITY CONCERNS STEM, ACCORDING TO AMCIT

PROFESSOR, FROM INDISCRIMINATE AND UNRESTRAINED POLICE ACTION IN PURSUING STUDENTS ON CAMPUS, EVEN TO THE POINT OF THROWING TEAR GAS INTO THEIR ROOMS, DURING THE HEIGHT OF EVENTS. SOME 30 STUDENTS WERE REPORTEDLY TREATED FOR TEAR GAS BURNS.

3. THE ATMOSPHERE ON CAMPUS IS DECIDEDLY TENSE AND UNHEALTHY. TO JUDGE BY REACTION OF THOSE ON CAMPUS, INCLUDING PROFESSORS, THE POLICE ACTION IS BEING PORTRAYED AS WITHOUT JUSTIFICATION. OR MOTIVATION. THE PROFESSOR HAD NOT HEARD OF THE REPORT THAT STUDENTS THREW A BRICK THROUGH THE WINDOW OF THE POLICE COMMISSIONER'S CAR, IN WHICH WAS RIDING HIS DEPUTY, WHICH FROM THE GOB SIDE IS SAID TO HAVE TRIGGERED THE POLICE CHARGE. HOWEVER, GOB OFFICIALS SAY THAT STUDENTS HAD BEEN WARNED OVER PERIOD OF WEEK OR TEN DAYS THAT ANY ATTEMPTS TO MARCH OFF CAMPUS TO PRESENT PETITION TO PRESIDENT WOULD BE TURNED BACK. THIS WARNING THEY IGNORED, AND NOW ARE APPARENTLY CHOOSING TO FORGET, WHILE THE GOB CONSIDERS IT A FUNDAMENTAL CAUSE OF POLICE ACTION.

4. COMMENT: FROM OUR KNOWLEDGE OF PROFESSORS
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LESHOAI AND SETILOANE, WHICH INCLUDES FREQUENT CONTACT WITH FORMER AND SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH LATTER, WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THEY WERE KEY INSTIGATORS OF STUDENT DEMONSTRATION. LESHOAI IS AN ARTIST WHO, ALTHOUGH POLITICALLY AWARE AND SENSITIVE (AS ARE NEARLY ALL SOUTH AFRICANS), IS FRIENDLY TO EMBASSY AND USICA. WE THEREFORE SHARE DOUBTS ABOUT THE ROLE THAT GOB APPARENTLY CREDITS HIM WITH BY "PI" ACTION. WE KNOW ABOUT REVEREND SETILOANE'S "BLACK THEOLOGY" MORE THAN ABOUT HIS POLITICS BUT FIND IT DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE THAT HE TOO WOULD RESPOND TO BOTSWANA NATIONAL FRONT (BNF) PARTY CAMPAIGN TO EMBARRASS GOB WHICH HAS ACCORDED HIM EXILE AND HIGH UNIVERSITY POSITION.
NORLAND

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NNN

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